DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 425 247 UD 032 659

AUTHOR	Flaxman, Erwin; Schwartz, Wendy; Weiler, Jeanne; Lahey, Meghan
TITLE	Trends and Issues in Urban Education, 1998.
INSTITUTION	Columbia Univ., New York, NY. Inst. for Urban and Minority Education.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	1998-10-00
NOTE	76p.
CONTRACT	RR93002016
AVAILABLE FROM	Web site: http://eric-web.tc.columbia.edu/
PUB TYPE	ERIC Publications (071) -- Reports - Evaluative (142)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Diversity (Student); Educational Change; Educational Practices; *Educational Trends; Elementary Secondary Education; *Equal Education; Ethnicity; High Risk Students; *Minority Groups; *Multicultural Education; Parent Participation; Racial Differences; *School Restructuring; School Size; Teaching Methods; *Urban Schools; Violence
IDENTIFIERS	*Reform Efforts

ABSTRACT

This report examines several important trends and issues in urban education and minority education. It reviews major principles for rethinking urban schooling so that students from diverse racial, ethnic, linguistic, and gender groups will be able to receive a more equal education, and it considers specific issues in their education. The focus is on practice and policy, on implementation rather than theory. The racial, ethnic, and social class characteristics of the majority of students attending urban schools are examined. Then two powerful trends in urban education and minority education are explored. The first is multicultural education. The aim of multicultural education is to increase equal educational opportunities for students from diverse racial, ethnic, social class, and cultural groups so that they can function effectively in a pluralistic democratic society. The second trend is systemic school reform aimed at changing the structure and governance of schooling, the roles of teachers and school personnel, curricula, teaching methods, accountability mechanisms, and relations with other institutions in the community. The aim of multicultural education is to make the students, schools, and society functionally different, while the aim of systemic reform is to make the schools more efficient structurally. The following specific issues related to urban education are addressed in detail: (1) school choice; (2) charter schools; (3) smaller schools; (4) schools with a focus; (5) school desegregation; (6) after-school programs for urban youth; (7) parent involvement strategies and research about parent involvement; (8) the educational needs of language minority children; and (9) violence prevention. Seventeen publications from the Educational Resources Information Center Clearinghouse on Urban Education on which this report is based are listed. (Contains 156 references.) (SLD)

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Erwin Flaxman, Wendy Schwartz,
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October 1998

ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education
Institute for Urban and Minority Education

UD032659

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This publication was produced by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education with funding from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, United States Department of Education, under contract number RR93002016, and from Teachers College, Columbia University. The opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the position or policies of OERI or the Department of Education.

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TRENDS AND ISSUES IN URBAN EDUCATION, 1998

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Introduction

The following report examines several important trends and issues in urban education and minority education. It covers both major principles for rethinking urban schooling so that students from diverse racial, ethnic, linguistic, and gender groups will be able to receive a more equal education, and specific issues in their education. The discussion of the issues focuses on practice and local policy; it deals with implementation rather than theory.

It is important to note that a number of trends and issues in urban and minority education are not addressed here, largely because of space limitations. The Clearinghouse on Urban Education has, however, carefully reviewed many other trends and issues in the past; these efforts are reflected in the Clearinghouse's contributions to the ERIC database; Internet web site, UEweb; and publications.

The discussion first examines the racial, ethnic, and social class characteristics of the majority of the students attending urban schools. Next, two powerful trends in urban education and minority education which start from different premises about what will make urban schooling successful are reviewed. The aim of *multicultural education*, the first trend discussed, is "to create equal educational opportunities for students from diverse racial, ethnic, social class, and cultural groups" so that they can function effectively in a pluralistic democratic society": this is schooling for "equity, justice, and cultural democracy" (Banks & Banks, 1995, p. xi). The aim of *systemic school reform*, the second trend, is to change all aspects of schooling: structure and governance, professional roles, curriculum and teaching, accountability mechanisms, and relations with other institutions in the community. Systemic reform, it has been argued, will bring about desirable outcomes for students that the isolated special programs of the past have failed to achieve. Thus, the aim of multicultural education is to make students, schools, and the society *functionally* different, while, more narrowly, the aim of systemic reform is to make schools (not students nor society necessarily) *structurally* more efficient and effective.

Following the discussions of demographic characteristics of urban students, and multicultural and systemic school reform, this report reviews a number of particular issues to improve the outcomes of education for urban school populations not well served by schooling in the past.

The Changing Racial/Ethnic Demography of the United States

Composition

The U. S. population is becoming more diverse by race and ethnic origin. As of 1996, whites comprised 73.3 percent of the population, followed by African Americans who made up 12.7 percent; Latinos, 10.5 percent; Asian/Pacific Islanders, 3.6 percent; and American Indians, 0.9 percent (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1996). Further, Latinos in the U.S. are themselves a demographically diverse group.: in 1993, of the 22.8 million Latinos in the U.S., Mexicans made up the largest subgroup (64.3 percent) followed by Central and South Americans (13.4 percent), Puerto Ricans 10.6 percent, Cubans 1.1 percent, and others 7.0 percent (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1995).

Racial and ethnic diversity has been increasing steadily in the United States in the last two decades and the trend is expected to continue. For example, data from the Census Bureau (1998) indicate that between 1990 and 1997 the Asian/Pacific Islander population increased 34 percent (after a growth rate of 108 percent between 1980 and 1990); at the same time the Latino population increased by 29 percent (after a 53 percent increase between 1980 and 1990). The rate of population growth for whites (3 percent) and African Americans (9.5 percent), on the other hand, is much smaller. Moreover, the increase between 1990 and 1997 in the actual numbers of Latinos is larger than for any other population group: there were increases of about 6 million whites, 2.8 million African Americans, and 2.4 million Asians. These population trends are expected to continue with fertility rates and immigration playing major roles: by the year 2050, it is estimated that the white population will decrease to slightly over one-half of the population (52.5 percent), 15.7 percent will be African American, 22.5 percent Latino and 10.3 percent Asian/Pacific Islander (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1995).

Given the projected decrease in the white population and the increases in African American, Latino, and Asian populations, it is expected that minority children will make up an increasing share of the school-age population during the coming decades. In fall 1994, American public schools enrolled more than 43 million students, of whom 66 percent were white, 17 percent African American, 13 percent Latino, 4 percent Asian, and 1 percent Indian and Alaskan (Orfield, Bachmeier, James, & Eitle, 1997). By 2020, the number of Latino children age 5-13 is expected to grow by 47 percent and the number of Latino children age 14-17 is projected to increase by 61 percent. Large increases in the numbers of Asian/Pacific Islander, American Indian, and Alaskan Native children are also anticipated: the number of children age 14-17 is expected to increase by 73 percent and the number of children age 5-13 is expected to increase by 67 percent. During the same time period, the

number of white children age 14-17 is anticipated to decrease by 10 percent (National Center for Education Statistics, NCES, 1997a).

Much of the diversity of the U.S. derives from the arrival of millions of immigrants from more than 140 countries. Mexico is by far the largest source of legal immigration and accounts for over one-fourth of the 22.6 million immigrants (Rumbaut, 1997). The largest group and most recent European arrivals have been former Soviet Jews and Poles. The vast majority of immigrant youth, however, comes from Spanish-speaking countries. Although immigrant youth represent only a small proportion of the nation's youth overall, their presence is felt as most young immigrants live in only a handful of the nation's cities. For example, in Los Angeles, immigrant youth represent 21 percent of all youth in that city, and in San Francisco and Miami immigrant youth make up 19 percent of all youth (McDonnell & Hill, 1993).

Poverty

According to the National Center for Children in Poverty (1998), nearly one in four children under age 6, or 5.5 million children, lived in poverty in 1996. The official poverty rate for children under age 6 was 23 percent, (with another 20 percent near poor), more than twice as high as those for adults 18-64 years of age and for the elderly (both about 11 percent). Of these poor children, 11 percent were living in extreme poverty. The Center also found that poverty rates vary greatly by racial or ethnic group. For example, African American and Latino young children continue to be disproportionately poor. Although the poverty rate for African American young children is slightly higher than for Latinos, the rate for both groups was more than three times higher than that of white young children. In 1996, the poverty rate for white children under age 6 was 13 percent; 44 percent for African American children under age 6; and, 42 percent for Latino children under age 6. Similarly, while 13 percent of white families with children under 18-years-old were poor in 1996, one-third of all African American families (34 percent) and Latino families (33 percent) with children under 18 were poor (Sturiale, 1997).

Although as a group, Asians experience lower levels of poverty (14 percent) than Latinos and African Americans, important differences exist between Asian subgroups. For example, Laotians and Cambodians experience the highest poverty rates in the country (40 percent and 38 percent, respectively) and equal proportions of Vietnamese families are as poor as some immigrant Latino families such as Salvadorans (25 percent) and Guatemalans (26 percent) (Rumbaut, 1997).

Poverty rates also vary greatly according to geographic location. Children in urban areas are

more likely than suburban or rural children to be poor (32 percent of children under age six in urban areas were poor in 1996 compared to 16 percent in suburban and 27 percent in rural areas) (Sturiale, 1997). Although the absolute number of children living in poverty is greater outside metropolitan areas, the density of child poverty in the cities is greater than in suburban or rural areas. Recent population shifts have accounted for some of the concentration of poverty in central cities. Between 1992 and 1993 as 245,000 people left the cities, mainly for the suburbs, 1,206,000 immigrants settled in urban areas. Immigrants are more likely to be poor, with 40.7 percent living in poverty, as compared to 14.4 percent of the total population (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1994).

The effects of poverty on children can be far-reaching, exposing them to numerous problems involving health, education, and general well-being. The Children's Defense Fund (1994) found that children living in poverty are more likely than non-poor children to suffer from serious illnesses, to be classified as learning disabled, and to experience educational failure. Moreover, some researchers estimate that as many as one in five poor children will experience homelessness sometime in their lives (Rosenman & Stein, 1990).

The Children's Defense Fund (1996) also estimates that over 100,000 children are homeless every night. Many of these children and teenagers live for extended periods in urban shelters. Most of these children are young: between 50 and 75 percent are under five-years-old. Between one-third and one-half of all homeless are families with children (Children's Defense Fund, 1996). The impact of homelessness on children can be devastating and long-lasting. Homeless youth are seriously at risk for educational failure. Since they often move from shelter to shelter, they must change schools frequently. They are often denied entry to schools because of residency requirements, lack of proof of immunizations, or lack of transportation. It is estimated that only 69 to 89 percent of homeless children are enrolled in school (Stronge, 1993). Homeless children who are in school face many obstacles. They may be segregated from other students, be inappropriately placed, lack comprehensive services, suffer ridicule from other students, and lack school supplies. They can also suffer from feelings of hopelessness and anger, be improperly nourished, and experience fatigue which makes academic success difficult to attain (First & Oakley, 1993). Furthermore, residence in a shelter provides little privacy for completing homework assignments.

The relationship between poverty and family structure is well-established. High divorce rates and a continuing increase in the number of births to single women mean that more and more children are living in families headed by women and thus in relatively low-income families. According the National Center for Children in Poverty (1998), children under age 6 living with unmarried mothers were about five times as likely to be poor (55 percent) as were those living with married parents (11 percent). Children born to unmarried teenage mothers were twice as likely to be

poor (47 percent) than children born to adult mothers (21 percent). African American and Latino children were much more likely to be living in single parent families than white children: 60 percent of African American children and 29 percent of Latino children lived with one parent. Families headed by women were much more likely to be poor than two-parent families, many due to the lack of a second income.

The association between poverty and family structure holds as well for several immigrant Latino and Asian subgroups: 30 percent of Dominican families are poor and 41 percent are one-parent households; Salvadorans (25 percent and 21 percent), and Cambodians (38 percent and 24 percent). However, there are notable exceptions. For example, while 30 percent of Mexican families are poor, only 14 percent of Mexican families are single-parent households. Similarly, of the 40 percent of Laotian families who are poor, only 12 percent of the families are headed by a woman (Rumbaut, 1997). Rumbaut (1997) makes the point that in some cases the different circumstances under which immigrants or refugees emigrate and resettle and the family support networks in the U.S. and home countries can exert a stronge influence on a family's economic well-being regardless whether a husband is present.

Poverty and Educational Achievement and Attainment

The association between parents' educational attainment and child poverty is also well-established. The high poverty rate of children in families in which a parent has less than a high school degree derives in large measure from reduced wages which are associated with lower educational attainment. Although a high school education alone does not guarantee that a family stays out of poverty, children in families in which a parent has a high school degree are much less likely to be poor than children whose parent has no high school diploma (30 percent and 62 percent, respectively) (NCES, 1997a). Parents' level of education remains higher for white children than for African American and Latino children. For example, in 1995, while 16 percent of African American and 27 percent of Latino children age 3-5 had parents who had not completed high school, only four percent of their white counterparts' had parents who had not (NCES, 1997a).

As the above suggests, one critical factor influencing an escape from poverty is educational attainment. For adolescents, the likelihood of poverty in the young adult years is strongly related to poor educational achievement and lack of a high school diploma. Although the relationship is complex, research suggests that there are strong links between a child's socioeconomic background, racial/ethnic background, academic skills, and likelihood of dropping out of school. Since 1992 dropout rates have improved for all groups of students, but the rate for Latino youth (30 percent) has

remained much higher than for African American (12 percent) or white youth (9 percent) (NCES, 1997b). It is important to note, however, that dropout rates are not all the same for Latino subgroups. Mexican American, Central American, Puerto Rican, and Dominican students have high dropout rates, while rates for students from Cuba and South America are closer to the national average (Fashola & Slavin, 1997).

Socioeconomic background also plays a role in the decision to drop out. Youths from families with the lowest incomes are eight times more likely than their peers from high-income families to drop out. Dropout rates for poor adolescents are consistently higher than those of their more affluent counterparts: the dropout rate among 14- to 16-year-olds from low-income families in 1996 was 22 percent compared to 11 percent from middle-income families and 3 percent from high-income families (NCES, 1998a). Yet, while the socioeconomic level of Latinos is similar to African Americans, dropout rates for African Americans are declining while rates for Latinos are increasing. Low-income Latino students drop out more than two times as frequently as other low-income students. Similarly dropout rates for middle-income Latino students are more than twice as high as that for other middle-income students. In fact, the dropout rate for middle-income Latinos (23.9 percent) is about the same as that for low-income African Americans (24.5 percent) (Fashola & Slavin, 1997).

Recent immigration is one explanation for the high dropout rates for Latino students. Overall, foreign-born Latinos are more likely than other students to drop out (44 percent) (NCES, 1998a). Another explanation may be difficulty speaking English, also a factor associated with dropping out of school. In 1995, of those 16- to 24-year-olds who spoke a language other than English at home, the dropout rate of those who had difficulty speaking English (44 percent) was substantially higher than that of those who did not have such a difficulty (12 percent) (NCES, 1997a). What is not clear, however, is what portion of the rate is attributable to dropouts from U.S. schools, as opposed to immigrants who come to the U.S. without a high school credential and never enter its schools.

School Environment

In addition to the closely related factors such as race/ethnicity, family income, parental educational attainment, immigration status, and family structure which impact on the decision to drop out of school, differences in school environments can also affect the achievement of urban students. Urban schools with high student poverty levels are unequal in many ways which affect educational outcomes. Most urban students have limited exposure to the rigorous curricula and experienced teachers which would enhance student achievement. Poor urban students also have limited access to

resources such as computers or the Internet. In 1996, for example, while 65 percent of schools across the nation had Internet access only 52 percent of all poor urban schools did (NCES, 1997a).

School achievement scores nationwide show a very strong relationship between poverty concentrations and low achievement. As reported in *Education Week*'s Quality Counts, 1998 (Jerald & Curran, 1998) academic performance is worse in high-poverty urban schools where the majority of students are poor. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), urban students perform poorly compared to their non-urban peers. NAEP reported, for example, that less than one-half (43 percent) of urban students scored at the "basic" level or above on the NAEP reading test at the same time 63 percent of students in non-urban schools did. Similar gaps in mathematics and science test scores existed between students in urban districts and non-urban schools. NAEP data also show that even students in non-urban high poverty schools score twice as higher than urban students in high poverty schools (Jerald & Curran, 1998).

Research has also shown that student achievement in school is strongly associated with the educational backgrounds of other students in the school (NCES, 1997a). Thus, in high poverty schools (with 40 percent or more of the students eligible for free or reduced lunch) where most students are poor, student performance on most outcomes is usually much lower than in schools where the majority of students are not poor. Recent data from the Harvard Project on School Desegregation demonstrate the increasing trend of the racial and ethnic segregation of African American and Latino students which has produced a deepening isolation from middle-class students and from successful schools. This trend has become particularly severe for Latino students where the level of intense segregation is higher than for African American students (Orfield et al., 1997). The Harvard researchers also found that while only a twentieth of the nation's segregated white schools face the conditions associated with concentrated poverty among their children, more than 80 percent of African American and Latino schools do. This finding indicates a very strong relationship between segregation by race and segregation by poverty. Moreover, school achievement scores across the nation indicate a strong relationship between poverty concentrations and low achievement (Jerald & Curran, 1998).

Immigrant Students

Relatively little is known about the educational achievement of Asian American students or immigrant students in general. Although Asian youth tend to have high achievement and attainment levels (in 1994, 80 percent of Asian American males and females 25-years-old or older had a high school diploma), differences do exist between Asian American subgroups. For example, high school

graduation rates vary widely among Asians Americans: the Hmong American population experiences an extremely low graduation rate of 31 percent while 88 percent of Japanese Americans earned a high school diploma in 1994 (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1995).

Kao (1995) and NCES (1992) have analyzed the educational achievement of Asian Pacific American students in the National Educational Survey of Eighth Grade Students. Kao examined the mathematics and reading achievement test scores of Asian Pacific American students and found they earned higher math scores than whites, but had similar reading scores. The NCES (1992) analysis found that Asian Pacific American students' English language ability and math and reading scores were associated with their socioeconomic status (SES). In other words, compared to Asian Pacific American students from high SES backgrounds, those from low SES backgrounds were more likely to perform below the basic level of the reading and math tests even after controlling for English language ability.

In an ongoing study of over 5,000 immigrant children in southern California and Florida, Rumbaut (1997) also found a strong relationship between students' educational achievement and the socioeconomic status of their parents. He found, for example, that by ethnicity, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Indian students performed well above national norms (around the 75th percentile), followed by Vietnamese, Filipinos, Cubans, and Colombians, all of whom achieved well above the 50 percentile. The Hmong, Mexican, and Cambodian students tested well below national math norms, followed by Lao and the Haitian. Importantly, however, the researchers also found that the association between social class and educational attainment does not necessarily follow with regard to academic grade point averages (GPA). For example, despite their poor performance on achievement tests and the fact that they come from the poorest families, the Hmong students had earned the highest academic GPAs of almost all the groups except for the high-achieving Vietnamese and other Asians. In fact, as measured by GPA, the researchers found that the immigrant students in their sample outperformed native-born students, including white students.

Labor Market Outcomes

The transition from high school to the labor market by non-college bound youth is not an easy one for many; however, the adjustment problems are much more severe for poor youth, dropouts, and minority youth. Given their greater tendency to leave school without a high school diploma, their lower likelihood of attending college immediately after graduation, and their more difficult labor market entry, youth from poor families are more likely to be neither enrolled in school nor employed in their late teens. Labor force participation rates and unemployment rates are closely

related to whether a young person has a high school diploma. For example, in 1995, while 63 percent of recent high school graduates (not attending college) were employed, less than one-half (48 percent) of recent high school dropouts were. Extremely worrisome is the role that race/ethnicity plays in mediating employment. In 1995, only one-half (52 percent) of African Americans with a high school diploma, and less than one-half (42 percent) of Latinos with one, were employed, compared to 63 percent of whites with diplomas. For dropouts, the situation worsens: 52 percent of whites, 34 percent of African Americans and 48 percent of Latinos were employed in 1995 (NCES, 1997a).

College Enrollment

College participation rates among all high school graduates (43.4 percent in 1996, an increase from 37.7 percent in 1990) are the highest ever recorded. Significant differences, however, exist between groups of students which reflect differences in access to and persistence in higher education. For example, in 1996, the college participation rate for African Americans age 18-24 was 35.9 percent, an increase from 30.4 percent in 1990. Latino students made similar gains: in 1990, the college participation rate stood at 16.8 and increased to 34.5 percent. The college participation rates for both groups, however, are well below those for white students: 45.1 percent of white high school graduates age 18-24 were enrolled in college in 1996 (NCES, 1997b).

College enrollment of Asian American students, on the other hand, surpasses that of whites: 55.1 percent of 18-24-year olds were enrolled in college in 1990. Within this group, however, college enrollment rates vary significantly. For example, in 1990, 66.5 percent of Chinese Americans within the 18-24-year-old Asian population enrolled in college, compared to 26.3 percent of Laotian Americans. Asian American students were also more likely than African Americans and Latinos to enroll in four-year institutions. Of the Asian American students enrolled in college, 60 percent were at four-year institutions compared to 58 percent of African American college students and 44 percent of Latino college students (Carter & Wilson, 1997).

Similar to differences in college participation rates, racial/ethnic groups also differ in their rates of college completion. Of those who graduated from high school in 1990 and entered college seeking a bachelor's degree, by 1994, 69 percent of Asian American students either completed their degrees or were still enrolled, compared with 65 percent of the white students, 53 percent of the African American students, and 54 percent of the Latino students (Carter & Wilson, 1997).

The Dimensions of Multicultural Education

Multicultural education has evolved as a principle of education in reaction to the failure of the prior efforts to equalize educational opportunities through school desegregation, revised school finance formulas, freer admission to higher education institutions, and the large number of special programs designed to "level the playing field," as many people metaphorically call these educational equity efforts. Historically, multicultural education is rooted in the intergroup education movement after War Two, the late nineteenth century work of a number of prominent black intellectuals who made the unacknowledged history of black people part of the national culture, and the flowering of ethnic (and women's) studies in the 1970s (Banks, 1995).

A Typology of Multicultural Education

The typology of multicultural education used by Banks (1995) has had significant influence in the field. It can be understood as:

- changes in the content of the curriculum in all subjects and at all levels in order to integrate material related to the experiences and perspectives of all racial, ethnic, social class, language, gender (and, most recently, sexual preference) groups.

- the acknowledgement of the diverse influences of cultural and gender experiences on knowledge production as a means of understanding students' ways of thinking, and the integration of these perspectives in the teaching and learning process.

- the creation of educational strategies to alter students' racial attitudes so that they will develop democratic values, including strategies to modify students' self-rejecting attitudes as a consequence of the status of their racial, ethnic, national origin, social class, or gender group in the larger society.

- equitable techniques and methods for enabling students from diverse groups to achieve, as distinct from techniques which consider some individuals and groups as "culturally deprived" or "culturally different."

- the creation of a process for changing the culture and organization of the school so that students from diverse groups will feel culturally equal and empowered.

The Practice of Multicultural Education

Multicultural education is a theory of the content of education, the teaching and learning process, and the very purpose of education. Because multiculturalism recognizes the different ways individuals and groups construct meaning, it has stimulated ethnographic research on schooling, and championed its findings as a necessary complement to (and sometimes replacement for) experimental or survey research. As a policy, the movement toward multicultural education has lead to initiatives, especially in professional organizations (i.e., the National Council of Teachers of English, the National Education Association, and the American Association of Teacher Education), to develop standards for multicultural education. Many universities, states, and municipalities have also adopted multicultural requirements. As a theory of social inclusiveness, multiculturalism provides the intellectual and political basis for bilingual education in schooling and language maintenance in larger community. What are now considered multicultural education practices in the school and the classroom include, for example, an inclusive curriculum leading to self and societal transformation, cooperative learning, culturally relevant pedagogy, and a greater family and community voice and involvement in education. Multicultural education is not without its detractors, however: it has been criticized for its intellectual relativism and the divisions in the unity of American democratic ideals that it is thought to engender (Ravitch 1990; Schlesinger, 1991).

Risk vs. Resilience

Since the 1960s, with the passing of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, students of minority racial, ethnic, social class, and language groups have been variously labelled "culturally disadvantaged" or "culturally deprived." Now, borrowing a descriptor from epidemiology, they and their families are also designated as "at-risk," both in popular and educational discourse. Poverty is thought to be the social factor to put a child or youth at risk for drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, violence, child abuse, delinquency, and school failures of all types (dropping out, conduct problems, and low academic achievement). Although being designated at-risk has meant more services for poor students, it has also stereotyped them and led teachers to expect very little from them, perpetuating a cycle of prophecies fulfilled.

Epidemiological studies, however, have shown that individuals develop effectively and become resilient despite risk and adversity. Despite predictions, many children function quite well to overcome the stressors in their environment through caring and supportive relationships in their homes, communities, and schools with adults who expect them to succeed. The adult comes to represent all that is different from the risks, problems, or adversity that the youth is facing. This

finding is repeatedly corroborated in studies in ordinary neighborhoods and schools (Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, Ouston, & Smith, 1979; McLaughlin, Irby, & Langman, 1984; Ianni, 1989). These "resilience skills" have been identified as social competence (the ability to form relationships) and metacognition (the capacity to problem solve), and evidence exists that they can be instilled or taught.

Viewing children and youth as variously at-risk and resilient counters a perception that social conditions predict outcomes which can only be altered by countering deficits. It allows educators to develop the individual rather than design interventions based on assumptions about the global and static social conditions of students' lives.

Systemic Approaches to School Reform

In response to a host of critics, public schools are undergoing massive efforts to realign approaches to learning and equity. To address concerns such as high dropout rates, student preparedness for the global economy, lack of educational standards, and other pressing educational problems, educators, policy makers, politicians and the business community have enacted scores of educational reforms: site-based management, curriculum reform, professional development, outcomes orientations, etc. Federal and state initiatives such as The National Education Goals, the Secretary's (of the U.S. Department of Education) Educational Priorities, President Clinton's Call to Action, and a bevy of state plans are all attempts to improve the structure and practice of the nation's schools. The country is now at the crest of a decade of school reform, but one need only to look at national, state, and local data on the outcomes of education to see that systemic school reform as currently practiced has not succeeded in transforming schools or in raising student achievement to the extent reformers have envisioned.

A Typology of School Reform Efforts

According to McDonnell (1989), restructuring efforts can be categorized as reforms that change the authority structure and governance of schools (e.g., school-based management, teacher autonomy, school choice); hold schools and districts more accountable by disseminating information that can then be acted upon (e.g., issuing school "report cards"); improve classroom pedagogy (e.g., new curricular models and teaching strategies, detracking); and create stronger linkages between schools and communities (e.g., building partnerships with local businesses, community groups, social services). All these reform efforts attempt to address the problems of poor educational performance in the nation's schools. However, as she points out, research has yet to conclusively establish the links between these strategies and student outcomes. Although reform is justified as benefiting students, most restructuring proposals have not framed arguments supporting these outcomes; rather, the advantages of most reforms are teacher empowerment, parental choice, and public credibility (McDonnell, 1989).

What Is Missing in School Reform

Because schools are complex organizations, no single reform strategy can be designated the most effective for raising student achievement; yet there are few efforts to design comprehensive

strategies. Nevertheless, many reformers and school practitioners assume that restructuring schools will necessarily lead to changes in teaching practices and student learning, which will ultimately enhance learning and achievement outcomes. As the research on restructuring shows, however, changes in school structure are weakly related to changes in teaching, learning, and student performance (Elmore, 1995). The relationship between structural change in schools and changes in teaching and learning are mediated by relatively powerful factors such as the shared norms, knowledge, and skill of teachers, and merely changing structures has an unreliable relationship to these factors.

Many educators suppose that greater teacher autonomy and collaboration will enhance teacher effectiveness in the classroom, which will lead to greater student learning. This assumption, however, is yet to be borne out by research, although when schools value instruction highly, and teachers take responsibility for student performance, teacher empowerment can lead to significant changes in pedagogy; and changes in pedagogy, by implication, are related to changes in student learning (Darling-Hammond & Hudson, 1989). No structural reform in education, it has been argued, will succeed unless it changes individuals: the path must be in the other direction. Elmore (1995) argues that when teachers learn to teach differently and develop shared beliefs about good teaching, then the organizational structures can be put in place that will be consonant with those shared skills, expectations, and beliefs, including, many educators would argue the recognition of student diversity.

Anyon (1995) offers a critique of the consequences for teaching and learning in school reform efforts when race and social class status are ignored. She argues that most recent analyses of unsuccessful school reform (and prescriptions for change) have isolated the educational, regulatory, or financial aspects of reform from the social context of poverty and race in which inner-city schools are located. Further, she illustrates how the enforcement of state-mandated teacher accountability results in a further breakdown in student-teacher relations with deleterious effects on student achievement. In one particular school, the state had mandated that classroom instruction be based on new reading and mathematics textbooks and that they were to be used for the proscribed grade level even though the majority of students read well below it. The state report required teachers to follow the texts closely and to test and retest students on skills not passed on the quarterly tests created by the publishers of the series. This requirement created massive frustration among teachers, and students thought the texts "boring and stupid." Student achievement actually declined, as students became resistant to the new curricula (since many could not read the texts). Anyon shows how this extremely difficult pedagogical situation, where teachers must meet curricular and instructional mandates and students repeatedly fail, is compounded by the desperate lives of most of the children which makes many of them confrontational and difficult to teach.

Promising Structural Reforms in Urban Schools

None of this is meant to suggest that the right structural changes cannot create an effective school environment, however. In fact, Wang, Haertel, & Walbert (1998) at Temple University have produced a compendium on successful and innovative research-based educational reform programs in schools. In their typology of successful programs, they classify programs into two types. They are: (1) comprehensive school reform programs which "focus on governance and organization, classroom management, and pedagogical strategies, and emphasize students' development and learning success across core curricular content"; and (2) curricular reform programs which focus on curriculum content and student mastery in one or more content areas.

Many researchers and reformers recognize that what is missing in the reform strategies is the creation of a personalized environment that promotes engaged and caring student-teacher relationships. They maintain that effective teaching and learning is predicated on teachers' knowing and caring about students. They argue that developing positive personal relationships requires construction of an entire school environment whose norms, expectations, values, and organizational design encourage and sustain good student-teacher relationships. Based on their research on how schools construct environments, McLaughlin & Talbert (1990) suggest that the most critical features of organizational design are school-level structures for communication and collective problem solving; broader teacher roles; instructional strategies (both inside and outside the classroom) that maximize student involvement; and strategies for teacher support and revitalization. They argue that schools need to extend to teachers the same kind of support and care that teachers are expected to extend to students.

There are major schooling alternatives constructed to change the environment of schooling, a central thrust in comprehensive school reform or whole-school reform programs; the Coalition of Essential Schools, James Comer's School Development Program schools, Accelerated Schools, Success for All schools, and the alternative schools movement come readily to mind. All of these restructuring strategies require a comprehensive plan. The models have been particularly popular with schools that serve low-income and minority students. They represent the best efforts to date in implementing successful comprehensive school reforms on a large scale. Currently, nationwide there are over 800 Accelerated Schools; more than 1,000 schools in varying degrees of participation in the Coalition of Essential Schools; over 600 schools involved in the Comer School Development Program; and, over 700 Success for All schools (Stringfield & Datnow, 1998). According to Stringfield and Datnow (1998), the number of schools participating in the above reform programs has doubled in the last four years and is expected to double again over the next couple of years.

Coalition of Essential Schools

In 1984 after the publication of *Horace's Compromise: The Dilemma of the American High School*, Sizer (1984) began to articulate the principles of schooling that would provide the guidelines for a restructured secondary school. This movement is now known as the Coalition of Essential Schools (CES). Nine principles address aspects of school governance, relations between students, parents, and staff, expectations of students' learning, and overall school ethos. The principles were created to promote critical thinking skills among students and to encourage personalized relationships between teachers and students. Although the various CES schools differ according to the students and community each serves, all have several similar features: a focus on academics, extensive teacher collaboration, core classes, block scheduling, demonstration of student mastery through authentic assessments, and ongoing dialogue between faculty members (Wang et al., 1998).

Much of the research and evaluation of CES schools have focused on implementation outcomes rather than program effects. Although several studies have attempted to document the impact of the model on student achievement, no clear consensus has emerged. In one study comparing outcomes of different reform models, Stringfield, Winfiels, Millsap, Puma, Gamse, & Randall (1994) found that after the first year of their longitudinal study, CES showed greater student engagement and greater student-teacher interaction, but at the same time, less interaction between peers. Positive student outcomes such as better attendance, lower dropout rates, and higher test scores have been found in individual schools, but large-scale, longitudinal studies have not been conducted. Some of the ambiguity of outcomes is related to issues such as lack of comparison groups but also in part to the nature of CES schools which do not adhere to traditional standardized measures of student success.

School Development Program

James Comer's approach to school restructuring in his School Development Program (SDP) model assumes that reform attempts generally fail to address the quality of relationships in the entire school environment (Comer, 1996). He argues that the psychosocial development of children is profoundly affected by their home and school experiences. As such, "the key to academic achievement is to promote psychological development in students, which encourages bonding to the school" (1980, p. 46). To foster this development a school must form partnerships with other institutions that affect children's lives. Comer's particular approach incorporates three components; the governance and management team; student support team; and the parent component.

The core of the program is the school management and governance team composed of the principal, teachers, parents, a mental health specialist, and support staff. The team collaborates to develop the school's overall plan and to address school climate and academic achievement. The student support team, which includes a mental health team, deals with the "whole" child, making certain that individual problems are handled holistically. The SDP parent component requires different levels of participation, from classroom assistance to school governance. SDP schools also typically offer an array of parent education activities. Although the specifics of each school plan differ, the instructional program typically includes small group tutorials three times a week for children who are at least a year behind grade level, and a Discovery Room to attract "troubled" learners. Implementation of the model requires a five-year cycle.

Data from several studies indicate that the SDP model has been successful in increasing the academic achievement of low-income inner-city students, and in improving school climate. For example, Comer reports in his Epilogue in *School Power* (1993) that a trend analysis of achievement data among fourth graders in two SDP schools demonstrated gains in mathematics and reading between 1969 and 1984. Several control group studies also show students in SDP schools with higher averages in mathematics and overall grade point averages than students from non-SDP schools. In terms of school adjustment outcomes, there is some evidence that SDP students have better attendance, fewer suspensions, fewer classroom behavior problems, and a better attitude toward authority than non-SDP students (Haynes, Comer, Hamilton-Lee, 1988). As Wang, et al. (1998) point out, however, because of the lack of significance testing, the relative importance of these findings is somewhat limited. Nevertheless, achievement and school climate outcomes appear much improved in SDP schools.

Accelerated Schools

The Accelerated Schools model developed by Henry Levin in 1986 is a comprehensive reform program that maximizes student learning through school level changes such as enriched curricula, improved school environment, and organizational changes. The key to Levin's design is the central importance given to "stakeholders" (students, staff, teachers, parents, and the community) and their input in reforming their school. Accelerated schools were designed to"accelerate" the learning rate of at-risk students by changing the instructional approach from remedial to a gifted and talented one. The main organizational features of Accelerated Schools are the steering committee made up of the principal (and "keeper of the dream"), representative teachers, other instructional and non-instructional school staff, student representatives and parent representatives; "cadres" or small groups organized around particular areas of concern for the school (e.g., family involvement,

assessment, etc.), and the School as a Whole (SAW) which approves all major decisions on curriculum, instruction, and resource allocation (Levin & Chasin, 1994). The process to become an Accelerated School lasts about six years.

Most of the information on program effects has been collected internally by individual Accelerated Schools (Wang et al., 1998). For example, Levin & Chasin (1994) report on early outcomes from the Thomas Edison Accelerated Elementary School. Although the school had only been in the Accelerated School process for 18 months, it already showed signs of improvement, such as increased (voluntary) enrollment, decline in student suspensions, better attendance, greater parent involvement, and a rise in standardized test scores. These results have been replicated in other Accelerated Schools. As Wang et al. (1998) point out, however, that these internal evaluations often lack control groups or are not conducted longitudinally. Nevertheless, data from Accelerated Schools point to a positive trend in a variety of outcomes.

Success for All

The Success for All (SFA) model, developed by Robert Slavin and his colleagues at Johns Hopkins University, is comprehensively designed to restructure elementary schools that serve children at risk of school failure with the goal of ensuring that every student will reach third grade on time with basic skills (Slavin, Madden, Dolan, & Wasik, 1996). The basic premise of the SFA model is that all children, regardless of background, can and should succeed in the early grades. The key components of the SFA model in each school include trained tutors (certified teachers) in grades 1 though 3, a schoolwide curriculum that focuses on language development, reading and early literacy, student assessment every eight weeks, early literacy intervention in preschool and kindergarten, family support teams to encourage and provide support to parents in the education of their children, and a facilitator who oversees the implementation the program (Slavin et al., 1996). The best known feature of the SFA model is the curricular component which focuses on early literacy intervention. Effective practices in early reading are combined with commercially available books and basil readers (Wang et al., 1998). Although the model offers very specific guidelines on implementing the reading program, schools can substitute a different program than the one prescribed by SFA.

Although internal evaluations by the program creators have shown enhanced student reading achievement and other benefits, such as lower absenteeism, greater grade promotion and a reduction in special education placements (Slavin et al., 1996), evaluations of SFA students by external evaluators have been more mixed (Wang et al., 1998). For example, Ross and Smith (1994) found positive effects of the first year reading program on kindergartners through second graders on

several reading tests, although not on their standardized achievement tests. Both internal and external evaluations, however, have found improvement in several measures for bilingual and English as a Second Language students.

Alternative Schools

The model of alternative schools also seems to offer a particular promise in promoting better outcomes for children at risk of educational failure. The premise of alternative schools is that the traditional school does not respond to the needs and interests of its constituents (Raywid, 1994). Typically, then, alternative schooling goes beyond issues of curriculum and instruction and emphasizes the building of a sense of community among students, staff, and parents. Such schools attempt to bring students and adults into close relationship and they make a commitment to enhancing the psychosocial development of the students. While not much research has been conducted on the academic achievement of alternative school students because of the uniqueness of each school, it is clear that they are successful in meeting students' needs and establishing communities of support. This is accomplished, in part, by extending the traditional teacher's role to one of counselor, confidante, and friend, and by paying more attention to the individual student's needs and concerns (Wehlage, Rutter, Smith, Lesko, & Fernandez, 1989).

Academic Standards in Urban Schools

The nationwide concern over raising curricular and graduation standards is, in part, a response to the growing dissatisfaction with the low-level, basic skills curricula that has characterized American education for decades. Critics argue that students graduate from high school academically unprepared for entering higher education and ill-prepared for functioning in the competitive global economy. As a result, efforts are gaining momentum at the Federal, state, and local levels to upgrade curricula and set precise achievement standards in most subject areas. The standards movement, however, has stimulated much debate and has particular relevance for urban students, as indicated by Anyon's example, presented above. Advocates of the implementation of standards believe that higher standards will benefit poor and minority students who have suffered under low expectations and "watered down" curricula. Some advocates for urban students who have long been frustrated by the lack of change resulting from previous reform attempts hope that national standards will provide the basis for new legal challenges to the inequities of urban schooling. But more prominently, many urban educators fear that poor urban school districts do not have the resources and capacity to support efforts to implement practices for higher standards. They too champion the cause for higher

standards but question whether they can achieved without, again, providing schools with equal resources—starting with "a level playing field." They argue for the development of "opportunity to learn"(OTL) standards along with academic content and graduation standards.

Opportunity to Learn Standards as a Measurement Tool

The original purpose of OTL measures, when introduced by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), was simply to describe aspects of the education process. To determine whether cross-national differences in students' mathematics achievement were caused by differences in students' learning experiences rather than in their ability to master the subject, IEA developed measures for quantifying the type and amount of instruction that students had received in a subject prior to testing (McDonnell, 1995).

Since that time, as the positive impact of well-designed OTL strategies on student achievement became clearer, the measures have been used to indicate overall educational quality, and, more specifically, the availability and use of education resources. Further, demonstrating the wide OTL differences among schools in the U.S. and the resulting differences in student achievement is a new way of identifying educational inequity (Guiton & Oakes, 1995). Thus, in the Hawkins-Stafford Education Amendments of 1988, Congress mandated the development of OTL indicators to measure the effectiveness of Federally-funded educational programs. The resulting report by the Special Study Panel on Education Indicators (SSPEI, 1991) included a range of measurable indicators that covered both classroom experience and the overall school environment.

OTL as a Set of Standards

Recognizing that effective OTL strategies increase student achievement, many education policy makers believe that setting standards will help schools, particularly under-resourced schools in poor urban areas, appreciate that they are essential to the educational infrastructure and make developing them a priority. Therefore, some drafters of the voluntary education standards included "school delivery" standards in their reports. In particular, the National Council on Education Standards and Testing (NCEST, 1992), commissioned by Congress to determine the feasibility of national standards and assessments, asserted that OTL standards are necessary to help close the achievement gap between advantaged and disadvantaged students. The following year, the Clinton Administration's Goals 2000: Educate America Act also called for the establishment of OTL standards.

OTL as a Policy

Despite experience demonstrating the value of OTL strategies, the willingness of policy makers to commit to OTL standards varies widely. Some believe that the school infrastructure should not be subject to Federal recommendations; further, a few even question whether it should be subject to state or local government policy. Also, some officials question the extent and effect of educational disadvantage experienced by urban and minority students (Elmore & Fuhrman, 1995).

OTL supporters, conversely, consider the establishment of standards to "represent a social contract between schools and the larger community (McDonnell, 1995, p. 312), and some argue that students should not be held to any performance standards at all unless their schools meet stringent OTL standards (Elmore & Fuhrman, 1995). A group in favor of OTL strategies but opposed to legislating standards points out that the best way for states to enhance OTL is to give local agencies the resources and freedom to reform schools overall (Elmore & Fuhrman, 1995).

There are several practical impediments to instituting standards. The largest is their likely cost. Another concern is the threat of possible lawsuits arising from the position that a school has violated the OTL standards mandate. Other concerns center on questions about the scope of Federal involvement and states' rights. Particularly relevant to urban minority students is the question about determining what these standards should include—to what extent will content standards express the needs and values of more diverse student populations.

OTL standards, like other education standards, would be voluntary even if promulgated. Some states, however, such as New Jersey, New York, and Texas, have already legislated standards, though usually mandating nothing more specific than an "efficient" education. Lawsuits dealing with equitable distribution of education resources are wending their way through state courts, and may ultimately result in the refinement of the states' ambiguous language about student educational rights (O'Day & Smith, 1993). In addition, OTL standards may be instituted as the result of lawsuits dealing with school finance, student assessment, or unequal opportunity (McDonnell, 1995).

The Nature of OTL Strategies

Current general school reform programs use OTL strategies, since most strive to align all components of a student's educational experience in a way that maximizes learning (O'Day & Smith, 1993). In addition, new cognitive science research providing insights on how students learn, and research suggesting the impact of race, discrimination, and segregation on learning, indicate ways to

teach students with different learning styles and various ethnicities most effectively (Baratz-Snowden, 1993; Polite, 1993). However, many schools either do not consciously relate OTL strategies to student achievement or reject them as luxuries they cannot afford, and attempt to raise standards with the current level of resources. These schools will depend on the promise of systemic reform to bring about greater student achievement in more academically rich classrooms. Nevertheless, it can be argued that the debate over OTL standards can serve to increase public awareness of the relationship between opportunity to learn strategies and achievement.

School Choice

It is generally agreed that urban public schools and school systems need to be radically reformed: currently, dropout rates hover above 25 percent, truancy is common, students struggle to acquire literacy skills, a great deal of teaching is uninspired, the physical conditions of most schools borders on deplorable, and violence is a perpetual threat. Advocates of school choice believe that empowering families with education options will radically change the structure and governance of public education, and, hence, will liberate the energy and creativity latent in the system (Paulu, 1989; Addonizio, Juday, First, Kearney, & Muller, 1991; Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1992; Cookson, 1994; Cookson & Luck, 1995). Choice is, in fact, a widely adopted reform, and public opinion polls generally show that Americans support the idea of school choice in principle, although they may not be anxious to avail themselves of the freedom it allows (Wells, 1990; Fliegel, 1993; Shokraii & Hanks, 1996).

Whether choice results in urban education excellence and equity, which its advocates claim, remains to be seen, although in some areas some benefits in some areas have already been shown.

Types of Plans

The term "school choice" covers a multitude of student assignment plans that vary significantly in their underlying assumptions and operational procedures. Plans have direct effects on student assignment to schools and indirect effects on the design of American education.

Some choice plans partially restrict the education choices families can make (called "controlled choice"); others have virtually no restrictions ("open enrollment"). Most plans fall near the middle of the continuum between these two types. Virtually every state in the nation has either enacted or is considering a choice plan.

Intradistrict choice allows students to choose schools within one public school district. Depending on the specific plan, the range of choice may include a few to all schools in a district.

Interdistrict choice permits students to cross district lines to attend school. Tuition funds from the state follow the student and transportation costs are usually provided. Unlimited interdistrict choice is equivalent to statewide open enrollment.

Intrasectional choice is limited to public schools.

Intersectional choice includes both public and private schools.

Controlled choice requires families to choose a school within a community, but choices can be restricted to ensure the racial, gender, and socioeconomic balance of each school. Often such plans comprise a strategy to comply with court-ordered desegregation.

Magnet schools are public schools which offer specialized programs. They are generally designed and located so as to attract students to otherwise unpopular areas or schools, and are often created to promote racial balance.

Post-secondary options enable high school students to enroll in college courses at government expense that may contribute to high school graduation requirements.

Second-chance options are alternative programs for students who have difficulties in standard public school settings. Most often these students have either dropped out, are pregnant or parenting, have been assessed as chemically dependent, or have been expelled from their previous school.

Charter schools are publicly-sponsored autonomous schools. They are substantially free of direct administrative control by the government but are held accountable for achieving certain specified outcomes.

Workplace training programs are apprenticeships which teach students a skilled trade not offered through present vocational training. Costs are divided between the employer and the school district.

Voucher plans constitute a system of fixed value certificate or cash payments by the government which enable public school students to attend schools of their choice, public or private.

Tuition tax credits constitute a system of funding choice which allows parents to receive credit against their income tax to subsidize non-public school tuition for their children.

Choice Plans Around the Nation

A variety of choice plans have been implemented in urban areas, representing most of the

possible types.

Statewide choice. In 1988 Minnesota became the first state to enact statewide open enrollment for all students. While ethnic diversity in some schools has increased, choice has not prompted schools and districts to reform to meet the demands of families.

Statewide choice is now also available in Arkansas, Idaho, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Nebraska, and Utah.

Citywide choice. New York City, the largest public school system in the country, initiated citywide choice in 1992. There is not yet conclusive evidence about its benefits, although some schools have made significant efforts to reform, while others, primarily magnet schools, developed attractive programs that have increased student achievement.

Desegregation plans. Cambridge and Boston in Massachusetts use choice as a means to achieve racial and ethnic balance in schools that previously primarily served students of color. The program has been largely successful in doing this, although some students are not admitted to their first choice school and there still exists some inequities in resources and staffing.

Voucher plans. Milwaukee, Wisconsin, implemented the nation's first voucher plan in 1990. Preliminary findings indicate that low-income minority students in the choice plan have improved academically.

Proposed voucher plans in some other states have been rejected by voters, but Cleveland, Ohio, has a plan that encompasses all public, private, and religious schools.

Effects of Choice

Choice can be limited to one district and thus have minimal educational design consequences, or it can be statewide and intersectional and thereby completely alter the way schools are organized. Choice plans tend to fit within the traditional structure of American education. However, if the movement toward privatization of education accelerates, new types of schools may emerge that do not fit within this structure. If, for example, the for-profit Edison Project were to successfully franchise a thousand private schools, American education would be profoundly transformed. Or, if the New American Schools Development Corporation, established in the Bush Administration's America 2000 education plan, had been able to create enough"break-the-mold schools" by using the resources of

corporations, think tanks, community organizations, and vendors of educational products, then the mode by which educational services are delivered would have been transformed.

Today, many non-education organizations are involved in education reform. Business, in particular, has taken an active interest in altering the structure of public education through policy recommendations, political activism, limited financial support, and technological assistance. It could be argued, therefore, that the traditional separation of public and private spheres is evolving into a new institutional configuration. For now, however, most choice plans have been developed and implemented within the parameters established by state constitutions and by traditional conceptions of a public school district.

Charter Schools

Charter schools have become popular because many people believe that they can provide a high quality education to public school students without the regulatory constraints imposed on conventional public schools. They are created and managed by an entity comprised of parents and/or teachers, community and/or business leaders, non-profit organizations, or for-profit businesses. Urban areas are particularly fertile ground for the development of charter schools because there is a great need to find ways to improve education in the face of poor resources and overcrowding in the public schools.

Funding

Charter school laws all set the charter school reimbursement rate at a lower level than for existing public schools. In addition, charters usually have start-up and building leasing costs not incurred by other schools; these expenses are often not reimbursed by the school district or agency that chartered them, but they may be paid directly by the state and by the Federal government's Goals 2000 funding. Some charters do not receive certain Federal monies for special services for at-risk students that are received by other public schools, although their student populations are no more advantaged than those at the other schools. Nevertheless, one study reported that California charter administrators believe they have more money than other schools (Corwin & Flaherty, 1995), a result of the fact that some charters also get funding from private sources.

Student Composition

The Federal government mandates that all schools receiving funds from its charter school initiative must adhere to civil rights statutes, and that all students must be given an equal opportunity to attend the charter. Data on the composition of the student bodies of charter schools differ considerably from survey to survey, however. A national survey of about 100 charters operating in 1995 found that 38 percent of the students in them were minority group members; one-third were eligible for a subsidized lunch program, indicating low family socioeconomic status; and 16 percent qualified for special education placement (Corwin & Flaherty, 1995). A 1996 survey of 225 charter schools in seven states found that minority group members comprised a much larger proportion of the student body (Finn, Manno, & Bierlein, 1996).

Programs and Practices

Charters make good use of their autonomy to employ educational innovations, particularly those involving use of technology. They seek to offer a clearcut alternative to other public schools in the community. Interestingly, many charters take a "back-to-basics" approach, which has become less popular among conventional schools than previously, and is therefore now considered an innovation (Finn et al., 1996).

Some charters have a theme that either governs curriculum and instruction or determines the nature of their student body. Charters frequently employ instructional methods promoted by reformers, such as multi-age student grouping, cooperative learning, and portfolio assessment (General Accounting Office, GAO, 1995).

Parent Involvement

A great many charters were created by parents who determine their curriculum and instructional practices at the outset. These founders, along with additional parents, then exercise an ongoing leadership role in the school's management. In general, charters have higher rates of parent involvement than other schools, a universally supported goal and a factor that contributes to their uniqueness. They are innovative in suggesting parent-children activities, and giving homework assignments that require parent participation (Corwin & Flaherty, 1995).

Teacher Qualifications

Charters offer teachers unique opportunities to become directly involved in all phases of their operations, and to become school "owners," instead of simply employees (Mulholland & Bierlein, 1995). Thus, even teachers' organizations that oppose the employment practices of some charters favor the charters' increased professionalization of teaching (DiLorenzo, 1996). In fact, some charters have been started by teachers working with parents.

Still, the ability of charters to attract and retain qualified teachers is one of their most controversial aspects. Many charter school officials differ substantially from teacher organizations both in their definition of qualifications and in their hiring and labor policies, such as working conditions, pensions, and other benefits. Usually, charters are exempted from complying with the hiring requirements for other schools and with teacher union contracts. However, some legislation

governing charters, and some contracts between charters and school districts, restrict the freedom charters' staffing decisions.

Autonomy, Accountability and Assessment

The autonomy of charters in choosing the content of their educational program, and their accountability, varies considerably, depending on state legislation and agreements with the agency approving their creation. The most autonomous are exempt from all academic instructional requirements, and students do not have to take standardized tests. Charters that contract with agencies other than the local district are exempt from all the policies of the district (except health and safety). Other charters, however, must request rule-by-rule exemptions (GAO, 1995).

The contracts of some charters require testing of some kind, as negotiated between the sponsoring agency and the school. Arguably, however, the use of standardized tests, where required to measure student performance, may discourage the establishment of charters which target low-achieving students because the students' scores may suggest that the school is ineffective. Because of the newness of the charter movement, the development of assessment methods that would most accurately reflect each school's academic program and measure student achievement is just beginning (GAO, 1995), so anecdotal data often must serve as the sole determinant of a school's success.

Smaller Schools

Benefits

Over the last 30 years research and experience have suggested that students, especially disadvantaged students, benefit in many different ways from attending small schools that serve between 100 and 1,000 students (Raywid, 1995). Student benefits include:

- better attendance and retention;
- better behavior, attitude, and engagement;
- extra attention from the staff;
- enhanced academic performance; and
- increased involvement in extracurricular activities.

Teachers in small schools are likely to expend extra efforts to ensure that the students achieve and the school succeeds. Further, downsizing frequently improves school organization: more effective and appropriate governance, stronger student supports, improved staff effectiveness and satisfaction, better advisement, and enhanced curricula. The benefits to the school increase along with its autonomy and separation from other district schools, since there are fewer time- and energy-draining bureaucratic hurdles to overcome, and the ability to develop its own distinctiveness is empowering. Finally, creating several small schools from a large, failing school is a solution to the problem of what to do with such a school, as well as an effective way to improve education without incurring construction costs, since the new schools are housed together in the old building (Foley & McConnaughy, 1982; Fine, 1994; Lee & Smith, 1995).

Characteristics

Some small schools operate in a structure totally their own. Most, though, exist within a building that houses other schools, as either one of several small schools that combine to fill the building, all with equal decision-making authority over building-wide issues, or as the only such school in a building otherwise housing a single larger "host" school. Some schools identified as small schools are really just special programs within a "parent" school, usually developed for a special student population, such as limited English speakers. Most aspects of their operation are controlled by the host school administration, and the teachers may have duties in both the parent and small schools. These schools are often less successful than the small schools that achieve the

separateness and autonomy necessary to distinctiveness (Oxley & McCabe, 1990; Wehlage, Smith, & Lipman, 1992; Lieberman, 1995).

Classification

Four broad types of small schools are distinguishable:

House plans. A house can be organized on a one-year or multi-year basis. Students and teachers remain together for some or all coursework. It is usually overlaid upon the department structure of the traditional middle or high school that hosts it, which restricts the amount of change the arrangement can create.

Mini-schools. This arrangement has some of the properties of a house plan and is also dependent on its larger host school for its existence. They almost always serve students over a several-year period, and usually have their own instructional program.

Schools-within-schools. These are separate and autonomous units with their own personnel, budget, and program, authorized by the board of education or superintendent. They operate within a larger school, sharing resources and reporting to the school principal on matters of safety and building operation. Both students and teachers choose to affiliate with such a school.

Small schools or ***schools-within-a-building***. Somewhat like schools-within-a-school, each, however, is an entirely new, separate, and independent school, with its own organization, instructional program, budget, and staff.

Founding Principles

Cohesion. Many small schools are based on a particular philosophy or a distinctive set of organizing principles.

Autonomy. With the permission from host schools or school districts, small schools develop their own organizational structure and climate. The four types represent a continuum with respect to autonomy and control over their own instructional programs, budget, and personnel.

Constituency. To create a school community that is cohesive and committed to common

goals, small school teachers must volunteer to work in the school, and students should elect to enroll there, making their decisions on the basis of shared interests instead of on the basis of ability or achievement levels.

Future Prospects

Several major cities—New York, Philadelphia, and Chicago, among them—have a significant investment in school downsizing, through strong professional and reformer support, and through financial support from private foundations and partnerships with non-profit organizations which are convinced that small schools are essential to urban education improvement. Downsizing experience to date has been mixed, although optimistic about its potential. It appears that, besides limited resources, the greatest inhibitors to a small school's ability to realize its potential is lack of autonomy—constraints imposed by stringent regulations, bureaucratic regularities, and longstanding labor agreements; and the need to mesh with policies and practices of the board of education, the school district, and the host school—and the hesitation of some education personnel at all levels to make fundamental changes in the way they function. Despite the difficulties, however, small schools are opening and many more are being planned.

Schools with a Focus

Schools with a theme and schools targeted for particular students have long been a part of the nation's education system, and they can be more effective than comprehensive high schools in urban areas (Hill, Foster, & Gendler, 1990). Indeed, 44 percent of school districts now have such schools (Steel & Levine, 1994).

Usually, a theme or focus possesses logical coherence, and, optimally, has transformative power. Instituting one involves both fundamental and pervasive change in school organization and content. To attract students and staff, and to provide a framework for an effective education program, schools consider several key issues when selecting an appropriate focus.

Issues of Principle

Equity. A school's focus should not segregate students along racial, ethnic, religious, gender, or socioeconomic class lines. To wit, schools designed to attract the gifted and talented, which historically have admitted only the ablest or best performing students, need to find ways to prevent the exclusion of disadvantaged and/or low-performing students. For example, in Montclair, New Jersey, programs labelled "gifted and talented" exist, but any family wishing to enroll its children in them may do so on the assumption that all children have talents.

Guarding against exclusionary requirements is also a concern of focus schools designed to serve a particular disadvantaged minority (Jones, 1991). For example, the Legacy School for Integrated Studies in New York has met with no resistance, because, while targeting African American children and the poor, it does not exclude others. Schools for marginal students, or programs targeted for dropout prone youngsters, also raise concerns about whether grouping students according to their alleged deficiencies is a form of tracking, since tracking tends to compound the problems of already disadvantaged students (Oakes, 1985).

Effectiveness. One goal of a focus is to enhance a school's academic effectiveness. It can do so by attracting students and staff who share an interest in a specific instructional program. Student interests, and family priorities, may offer far more practical guidance for developing programs and grouping students than do ability levels. There is no valid reason to believe that what average, or even poor, students need instructionally is very different from what the ablest need. For instance, Resnick (1987) emphasizes that *all* of learning should be cooperative, active, contextualized, and concretized.

Also, shared interest in a topic may well drive an effective curriculum for a group of students regardless of their diverse abilities.

Issues of Organization

Curriculum. One popular type of focus is a curricular theme. According to a recent study (Steel & Levine, 1994), 38 percent of magnet programs emphasize course content, with math-science-engineering, computer science, humanities, and multicultural studies the most frequent choices, although many secondary school magnets have a career-vocational theme. A theme is usually of sufficient breadth to articulate a full school program: course content and selection, pedagogy, activities, scheduling, and even school organization. Use of a theme in a magnet school ranges from simply providing related elective courses to infusing the entire educational program with content related to the theme (Blank, Dentler, Baltzell, & Chabotar, 1983).

Instruction. Schools selecting a pedagogical or instructional focus may have an advantage with regard to cohesion, since a particular instructional approach to teaching can more readily be brought to bear across the curriculum than can a theme based on content. At Central Park East Secondary School in Manhattan, for instance, the theme is the cultivation of five "Habits of Mind," which are five core questions to be posed about all new content introduced (Henderson & Meier, n.d.).

Orientation. The third type of focus is an orientation or worldview that brings coherence to the school's program and motivates students to apply themselves to it. It is exemplified by the "free" schools of the '60s, the "open" schools of the '60s and '70s, and the "traditional" or "fundamental" schools of the '70s and '80s. These focus schools have a fairly distinct set of educational goals, and they project a clear character ideal or model, as well as a recognizable outlook on life and its purpose. Each attracts a constituency committed to a shared set of assumptions and values, and supportive of the resulting practices.

Overall Considerations

A theme or focus constructed on an additive basis to allow pursuit of pet projects cannot possess logical coherence; because the projects are disparate and unconnected, the school's overall program does not cohere. It also cannot attract a group of like-minded school constituents, only an assemblage strongly interested in one or two items on the projects list. It is not just a matter of

reforming one or two components, even such central ones as curriculum and/or pedagogy. Restructuring involves both fundamental and pervasive change in school organization: redefining rules, roles, relationships, and responsibilities, along with such structural components as schedules, administrative units, and governance—and, or course, changes in content and presentation. A school that fulfills the promise of the focus school concept is also a restructured school—or it has failed to deliver.

School Desegregation

Recent Court Decisions

One of the most prominent current education trends is the increasing number of court cases which release school districts from court supervision of their desegregation efforts (known as granting "unitary" status). Courts are allowing formerly segregated school districts to be released from court-ordered busing once they have taken all "practicable" steps to eliminate the legacy of segregation. Further, courts have ruled that school districts are not responsible for remedying local conditions, such as segregated housing patterns (Fife, 1996). The result of these decisions has been that many urban school districts are moving toward increasing resegregation of their schools as students return to neighborhood schools (Orfield, 1996).

The Return to Neighborhood Schools

When a school district is released from court supervision, it is free to send students back to their neighborhood schools. Community members, parents, and educators often support a return to neighborhood schools because they believe that desegregation is costly, has not accomplished what it was intended to do many years ago, and has resulted in meager improvements (Neuborne, 1995). They also hope that whites and middle-class residents who fled during desegregation will return to the schools closer to their homes (Orfield, 1996). Other people claim that African American children would be better off staying in more welcoming neighborhood schools.

The reality is, however, that many urban students return to schools which are segregated and inferior. Often new funding is promised to upgrade school facilities and educational programs, but not delivered. But even if extra funds are provided, they are often not enough to transform urban schools, which must struggle with the profound and increasing poverty and joblessness in their local communities.

School Resegregation

The Harvard Project on School Desegregation has reported that school segregation has increased steadily over the past 15 years, with profound consequences for urban minority students. For example, while only 5 percent of segregated white schools face conditions of poverty among

their students, more than 80 percent of segregated African American and Latino schools do (Orfield, Bachmeier, James, & Eitle, 1997). Thus, a student who moves from an integrated school back to a segregated neighborhood school will most likely exchange the resources of a middle-class school for a poverty-stricken one. Researchers (Wells & Crain, 1997) argue that the increasing concentration of urban minority students in high poverty schools cuts off access to the full range of middle-class opportunities—impacting on higher education, employment, and future choice of residential community— that a more affluent integrated school would provide.

Impact on Academic Performance

Desegregation has little relevance for many of the nation's largest cities: a number of the biggest urban districts are one-sixth or less white, and thus lack a sufficient number of white students to meaningfully desegregate. Even within desegregated schools, claims persist that segregation still continues under the guise of school tracking and grouping practices. Because of these trends in the 1990s, desegregation planners across the country are increasingly turning their attention from desegregation remedies to achieve racial balance, such as student transfer and reassignment, to a focus on access, equity, and the academic performance of minority students (Willis, 1994).

Plaintiffs in desegregation cases have recently shifted their focus to what are sometimes referred to as "educational vestiges." They argue that the educational achievement of racial and ethnic minority students continues to lag behind that of white students in the school district, and that this achievement gap, a vestige of legalized segregation, must be eliminated before a school district can be released from court orders (Lindseth, 1997). This argument is critical, and it will most likely be the subject of further Supreme Court decisions that focus on within-school integration.

Within-School Integration

Currently, several school districts across the country are focusing on provisions that address internal integration rather than on the more conventional desegregation measures such as student assignment. Willis (1994) uses the term "within-school integration" to mean "the elimination of all vestiges of segregation from all policies, practices, programs, and activities *within* a district's school" (p. 7). The focus of within-school integration is provision of the greatest possible integration and interaction among students and staff regardless of the student composition of the school. Although a school's racial/ethnic enrollment may reflect integration, the school can often engage in segregative practices that negate the benefits of a well-integrated school (Willis, 1994).

For many school districts engaged in desegregation planning, the emphasis on within-school integration addresses both integrated schools and racially identifiable schools (segregated schools) since a school district often has a combination of both schools. For integrated or racially balanced schools, plans are developed to address equitable participation and performance of minority students compared to white students attending the same schools. In racially identifiable schools, plans are developed to address the quality of education and performance of minority students (Willis, 1994).

After-School Programs for Urban Youth

The number of children and adolescents without family supervision after school is increasing. Many such "latchkey" children, home alone after school, may experience loneliness, fear, and worry. They also risk injury, victimization, bad nutrition, and the negative impact of excessive television viewing while. Those who "hang out" with similarly aimless friends may join gangs or engage in premature sexual activity, drug and alcohol use, and other anti-social behavior. Idle youth are particularly prone to many negative influences in urban areas (Marx, 1989).

Because studies have shown many benefits for poor urban students who engage in planned after-school activities (Posner & Vandell, 1994), a large number of such programs have been implemented in cities around the country. One study reported that over three million children participated in some type of after-school program in the early 1990s (*National Study*, 1993), but it is likely that more participate now. Programs range from small projects with a single purpose, such as raising reading scores, to well-funded, multi-site comprehensive programs operated by state education departments. Many focus on building self-esteem and a range of other personal competencies that can help youth meet the challenges of a disadvantaged or chaotic environment.

Program Sponsorship

Schools frequently sponsor after-school programs since many districts, other public agencies, or legislation require it. The advantages to school sponsorship include credibility, a continuity of care for students and parents, accessibility, resources, and expertise. The disadvantages of programs in schools include higher personnel costs if after-school staff salaries must be equal to teachers', unexpected program cuts if the after-school program budget is tied to that of the school, and a perception by children that the program is an extension of the school day rather than a separate (and, possibly, more positive) experience (*Latchkey Guidelines*, 1987).

Many community and religious organizations, either profit-making or non-profit, are also qualified to manage programs. A potential difficulty for non-school sponsors is the availability of a well-equipped site that is a safe, easy, and inexpensive commute from school and home; thus, independent programs sometimes rent school space for their after-school program.

Program Design and Goals

Overall, after-school programs are freer than schools to use innovative curricula and activities to promote children's learning, because they can be flexible in tailoring children's time to their needs, have a better student/staff ratio, and benefit from multi-age groupings. In general, most programs strive to foster the psychosocial development of youth by developing their sense of self-worth and interpersonal social skills, and appreciation of cultural diversity. They reinforce school day learning by integrating personalized educational supports into each child's schedule, such as tutoring and assistance with homework, and provide educational enrichment activities. Some also provide recreational activities to develop physical skills and constructively channel energy. A few provide age-appropriate job readiness training and information about careers and career training (*Latchkey Guidelines*, 1987; Marx, 1989; Brooks & Herman, 1991; *What Adolescents Want*, 1992; Carnegie Council, 1994; Morton-Young, 1995):

Parent and Community Involvement

Parental participation in after-school programs is just as important as in other aspects of children's lives. Even before they enroll their children, parents are asked what they want their children to learn, and what their children like to do (*Kids' Time*, 1994). After the children begin attending the program, staff tries to meet regularly with parents to help them develop learning activities for their children at home, to provide information on parenting issues, and to reinforce parents' experiences with their children's school (Morton-Young, 1995). Also, communicating with parents of diverse backgrounds about their children's needs, and their child-rearing methods and expectations for their children, can prevent conflicts. It can also help staff better appreciate diversity.

New Thinking about Program Content

The optimal purpose of after-school programs is being reconsidered in light of the ongoing effort to institute standards for student subject mastery. Both the Federal government and private foundations are now suggesting that students use the after-school hours for additional educational activities, both enrichment and remedial. They assert that linking the school day to after-school activities, by providing extra learning time in an environment supervised by educators, can significantly enhance academic achievement, and can benefit urban students particularly, since many attend schools whose effectiveness is compromised by a host of factors.

The directors and staffs of existing after-school programs frequently are not teachers, however, and their goals have been to provide a well-rounded afternoon of activities; not an extension of the school day. Further, there is little history of meshing school curricula with after-school program activities, so program staff may resist pressures to redirect their efforts to serve an achievement agenda. Thus, before the concept of after-school programs undergoes massive changes, concerned individuals with a range of views, interests, and experiences will need to collaborate for the purpose of determining what types of after-school activities best meet the needs of children and youth.

Parent Involvement: Effective Strategies and Useful Research

Recent major legislation, such as the Goals 2000: Educate America Act and the reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), has made parents' involvement in their children's education a national priority. School districts nationwide are being encouraged to demonstrate innovative parent involvement approaches in order to obtain Federal education dollars. In particular, eligibility for Title I funding, available to school districts in high poverty areas, is now contingent upon the development of "compacts" in which families and schools agree to assume mutual responsibility for children's learning. In such compacts, partnerships must be forged between homes, schools, and communities, requiring an unprecedented level of contact and communication between parents and educators (e.g., U.S. Department of Education, 1994).

Parent involvement is currently a component of many school reform initiatives. Indeed, as discussed above, in addition to traditional types of involvement (such as helping their children with homework and attending school activities), parents now have the authority to select which public schools their children attend. In areas where vouchers are provided, they can even select a private school for their children without the usual, and sometime prohibitive, family expenditure associated with a private education. The charter school movement enables parents to help create and manage a public school, giving them the opportunity to mold a customized education for their children that reflects their values and ideas.

These exciting opportunities notwithstanding, many urban parents are still reticent to become involved in their children's school. A variety of factors interfere with their desire to help educate their children. Lack of English language skills, cultural differences, fears based on their own school experiences and feelings of inferiority, and simply an overburdened life that results from poverty and community social disorganization, all combine to keep parents distant from schools.

The new strategies for involving parents are taking account of these obstacles. In addition, researchers are turning their attention to development of studies that more accurately determine the effects of various types of parent involvement. Their goal is to ensure that parents' time and effort, and those of the educators and social service providers working with them, result in real benefits for their children.

Characteristics of Effective Parent Involvement

Studies of the outcomes of parent involvement on their children's positive development indicate the effectiveness of many different activities, including: listening to children read at home and participating in joint learning activities, participating in intervention programs, providing a stimulating literacy and material environment, communicating high expectations and moderate levels of parental support and supervision, appropriately monitoring television viewing, and emphasizing effort over ability (Tizard, Schofield, & Hewison, 1982; Snow, Barnes, Chandler, Goodman, & Hemphill, 1991; Clark, 1993; Fantuzzo, Davis, & Ginsburg, 1995; Kurdek, Fine, & Sinclair, 1995). The extent of the benefits of these activities is, partially at least, determined by family factors such as ethnicity, family structure, maternal employment status, socioeconomic status, and gender (Schiamberg & Chin, 1986; Milne, 1989; Tocci & Englehard, 1991; Lee & Croninger, 1994).

Characteristics of Successful Initiatives

The most successful reform initiatives are collaborations between parents and schools that are situated within the context of the surrounding community. They seek to change a school's culture; the quality of relationships among educators, parents, and children; and students' educational outcomes. Since schools alone cannot solve the problems imported into them from society (Comer, 1998), some projects reach beyond schools; they draw upon the power of community institutions, such as churches and civic groups, to improve schools and aspects of life in the community that impact education. Typically, a group of local institutions, sometimes with the aid of foundation funds, hires an organizer to initiate and facilitate the reform process. Through conversations with many individuals and groups, the organizer helps to identify a core organizing team of 8-15 parents and educators that can coordinate the work of the others involved. Such collaborative initiatives share certain characteristics. In general, they:

- ***view the school and community as part of a social ecology*** that is interdependent and must be understood as a whole in order to identify problems and develop solutions (Heckman, 1996; Murnane & Levy, 1996).

- ***build relationships based on common concerns*** and mutual self-interest to foster increased involvement; create resources such as trust, information channels, and shared norms among people; and promote constructive action for change (Coleman, 1990; Cortes, 1994).

- ***acknowledge the role of power***, or "the ability to act," in school-community relationships in order to help parents and educators recognize the self-interests of the different groups and individuals in a particular education bureaucracy and the relative power that each has over educational policy and practices, and then to constructively influence these various groups to make decisions beneficial to students in their schools (Cochran & Dean, 1991).

- ***foster the collaborative leadership of principals***, with the goals of creating an environment where teachers and parents feel safe enough to take risks, and even to fail, in an effort to create positive change; and of enabling principals to share the responsibilities of leadership with teachers and parents who have been identified as leaders (Cortes, 1994; Heckman, 1996; Murnane & Levy, 1996).

- ***develop and train parents and educators as leaders*** so they can build networks of relationships and motivate and recruit people to accomplish a task and develop the skills needed to reform education in their community and resolve conflicts (Cortes, 1994).

- ***monitor and evaluate progress*** in order to make accurate school achievement data publicly available; track the impact of reform efforts on these outcomes, and ensure accountability for educational improvement (Public Education Association, 1997).

Methodological Issues in Parent Involvement Research

Despite the validity of some studies, much parent involvement research to date contains serious methodological flaws, which results in a lack of confidence in study findings and limits their accuracy and usefulness. In the future, in order to identify with greater precision the types of involvement that have positive outcomes for student achievement, studies must overcome these flaws. Specifically, greater attention needs to be paid to several key issues in parent involvement research, related to both theory and methodology. Therefore, studies should embody the following characteristics:

- ***Use of experimental procedures***. The critical component of this design, random assignment to the control and experimental groups, rules out pre-test differences between groups, so that differences at post-test can be attributed to the independent variable—parent involvement, in this case—with confidence.

- ***Isolation of the effects of parent involvement***. The most dependable studies separate the effects of parent involvement from related variables and from the impact of other adults involved in the program.

- ***Clarification of the study's description of parent involvement***. In order to create a coherent understanding of the importance of different aspects of involvement, the most useful studies identify explicitly which aspect of involvement they are measuring and how it fits into the broader construct of parent involvement. To facilitate such identification, common instruments for measuring parent involvement across a variety of settings need to be developed.

- ***Objective measurement of parent involvement***. Since self-report data can be unreliable, research techniques such as direct observation of parental behavior with standardized data collection tools increase the accuracy of study results.

Additional issues requiring further attention in parent involvement research include the differential benefits of involvement at school and at home; the amount of involvement necessary to effect a positive impact on children, and the ways that quality of involvement impacts on the importance of the amount of involvement; the comprehensiveness and complexity of the involvement activities; the ancillary beneficiaries of parent involvement (for the parents themselves, families, schools, and communities); and the differential gender effects of parent involvement.

The Educational Needs of Language Minority Students

Bilingual Instruction for Hispanic Students

For the past 25 years, the education of the country's language-minority students, 74 percent of whom are Spanish-speaking, has been mainly addressed by short-term Federally-funded programs specializing in providing variations of bilingual instruction and English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction in elementary and secondary schools. The question of the effectiveness of these programs is often obscured by the politicization of the issue of educating language-minority youth. For example, some critics of bilingual education argue that taxpayers' money should not be used to maintain a child's native language and culture (Walters, 1998; others cite nationalistic concerns, viewing fluency in another language with suspicion (Nieto, 1996). Complicating the issue are immigrant parents themselves who are dissatisfied with their children's rate of English language learning in bilingual programs; they push for English-only instruction as a way for their children to get ahead in their new society. Unfortunately, in addition to focusing the debate at the level of politics and ideology, the politicization of the issue has detracted from the real issues of the role of students' native languages, cultures, and experiences in their learning (Moll, 1992).

Advocates of bilingual education, while not straying from the argument that bilingual education is needed to create truly bilingual and biliterate students, have been forced nevertheless to reexamine some of the unintended negative effects that bilingual programs have produced. While the programs have been most helpful in targeting specific educational needs of students, they have also alienated both the students and their teachers from the social and academic mainstream of the school. Their "remedial program" label has deprived many students of high expectations, higher aspirations, equality, and excellence in academic endeavors (Cummins, 1993; Lucas, 1993; National Coalition of Advocates for Students, 1994). The program fragmentation and student alienation have had an extremely negative impact on bilingual teachers as well; bilingual/minority teachers in the programs have generally been sent to the back of the "mainstream bus" of school reform and staff development. This isolation has created a culture of "us vs. them" between bilingual and mainstream teachers. It has engendered in bilingual teachers at best a superficial interest in school innovations and restructuring efforts; at worst, a deep rooted sense of disempowerment.

Current Research Findings on Bilingual Education

A wide variety of program models characterize bilingual education although they can be classified into four general types. The ***early-exit transitional model***, the most frequently implemented model, provides intensive English instruction alongside instruction in native languages; its goal is to mainstream students as soon as possible without letting them fall behind in subject areas. The ***late-exit program*** (also called a maintenance, or developmental bilingual program) aims to build on the students' native language skills to foster literacy as they continue to acquire English. ***Immersion*** generally refers to instruction in English, using an ESL methodology, with the goal of mainstreaming students quickly. Less common, but perhaps most effective, is the ***two-way bilingual program*** which incorporate both language-majority and language-minority students in one setting with the aim of developing fluency in both languages (Walters, 1998).

Although transitional programs are the most common program alternative, it is not clear whether they are most effective in facilitating English language development. In a longitudinal study comparing over 2,000 elementary school students in three types of programs (early-exit transitional, late-exit transition, and English immersion), Ramirez (1991) found that students in all three programs learned English. The study failed to demonstrate the superiority of the transitional program over English immersion, however. On the other hand, some advocates suggest that the Ramirez study provides a rationale for late-exit programs (rather than early-exit or immersion programs) because, by encouraging students' native language in substantive ways, the programs encourage them to maintain close relationships with family members who can be more involved in their education (Nieto, 1996). Indeed, some researchers find the secondary effects of bilingual programs to be more important than the acquisition of English such, as motivating students to remain in school, and in general making school more meaningful.

The finding that bilingual education can reinforce important relationships among children and their family members when children retain their native language is especially salient for preschool children. For example, a Spanish-language preschool, *Un Marco Abierto*, operates according to the belief that teaching in a child's first language builds esteem and pride in family and community (*Pequeñitos en Acción*, 1991). The National Association of the Education of Young Children has a particularly strong position on the importance of strengthening children's native language; a recent position paper asserts that "loss of their home language may result in *the disruption of family communication patterns, which may lead to the loss of intergenerational wisdom; damage to individual and community esteem; and the children's potential nonmastery of their home language or English*" (NAEYC Position Statement, 1996, p. 5).

One of the most recent studies on the effects of bilingual education suggests that the longer the student receives combined native language and ESL support, the higher their academic achievement. Although, research shows that children in English immersion programs make faster gains in English acquisition than those in bilingual programs in the short run, Collier and Thomas (1998) have found that students who had bilingual instruction catch up to those who were in English immersion classes and actually surpass them academically in late elementary and secondary years. Collier and Thomas' findings suggest that students who receive English only instruction take longer than students with bilingual instructional support to reach average levels of achievement.

Educational Strategies for Multilingual Classrooms

The complex issue of bilingual education has been compounded by the large increases in language-minority youth, particularly in urban areas. In 1994, the number of language-minority students in the U.S. was estimated at 9.9 million. Of these students, approximately one-fifth were considered "limited English proficient" and in need of special services. In some urban schools, with large numbers of immigrants, it is not unusual to find over one hundred different languages represented. Within this context, educators must find ways to supplement bilingual education with multilingual programs.

In a high level synthesis of research on schooling for language-minority children, August and Hakuta (1997) identified several attributes that are associated with effective schools and classrooms for language-minority youth. In particular, they note that research shows that in effective classrooms, staff members "design the learning environment to reflect school and community contextual factors and goals while meeting the diverse needs of their students" (p. 174). For example, they cite several researchers who found that there is no one strategy that is effective under all conditions in educating English language learners; rather curriculum and instruction must respond to the needs of the learners. August and Hakuta also present data which show that effective classrooms incorporate native language use even where most instruction takes place in English. For example, Lucas and Katz (1994) found that in exemplary multilingual classrooms, native language use was a persistent and key instructional strategy.

Teachers can positively support their language-minority students in the classroom in a variety of ways. They can create learning conditions where students perceived as having low status (e.g., limited English speakers in a classroom where English is the dominant language, students with academic difficulties, those perceived by their peers as less competent, etc.), can demonstrate their knowledge and expertise (Cohen, 1986). Then, the students can see themselves, and be seen by others,

as capable and competent. Such "democratic" contexts engage all students in peer learning activities without isolating or ranking them, and foster their self-confidence and academic motivation.

Additional approaches, such as language experience, process writing, reciprocal teaching, and whole language activities also have the potential to be used to create humanizing learning environments where low-status Latino students receive academically rigorous instruction (Zamel, 1982; Palinscar & Brown, 1984; Cohen, 1986; Edelsky, Altwerger, & Flores, 1991; Pérez & Torres-Guzmán, 1992). These approaches capitalize on students' existing knowledge (including linguistic and cultural) and experiences, and are enriching and cognitively challenging. Learning occurs when prior knowledge is accessed and linked to new information; new information is understood and stored by calling up the appropriate knowledge framework and then integrating the new information (Jones, Palinscar, Ogle, & Carr, 1987). Acknowledging and using existing student language and knowledge makes good pedagogical sense, and it also constitutes an affirming experience for those students who feel dehumanized and disempowered in the schools.

Professional Development in Bilingual Schools

Although there have been many staff development opportunities for bilingual/ESL teachers, programs typically lack comprehensiveness and continuity. Fads come and go and bilingual teachers try them for a year or two, or simply adapt a few techniques or components of a model. Accountability has been rare. An exhaustive meta-analysis of effective programs for Latino students illustrates that throughout the country bilingual teacher classroom performance has rarely been considered, evaluated, or held accountable (Fashola, Slavin, Calderón, & Duran, 1996). However, blaming reluctant bilingual teachers for program ineffectiveness is incorrect, since most implementation efforts lack follow-up support to give teachers encouragement and constructive feedback on their progress.

Effective instruction in bilingual/multicultural schools requires that teachers combine a sophisticated knowledge of subject matter with a wide repertoire of teaching strategies, and with state-of-the-art knowledge about learning theory, cognition, pedagogy, curriculum, technology, assessment, and programs that work. Teachers also need to have ample knowledge of the students' language and sociocultural and developmental background, and to be as proficient as possible in two languages. In addition to bilingual and mainstream teachers, counselors, resource specialists, and administrators must undertake tasks they have never before been called to accomplish. Yet, there is still much reluctance to change and to participate in a staff development program focusing on bilingual/ESL issues (Calderón, 1994; 1996; Calderón & Carreón, 1994; De Villar, Faltis, & Cummins,

1994; González & Darling-Hammond, 1996; Development Associates, 1995).

Until now, schools have relegated language-minority students to bilingual teachers only, taking the opportunity away from other teachers to grow professionally to meet the nation's educational needs. However, if *all* students are to succeed, *all* teachers in *all* schools must be given profound learning opportunities and support within a well-structured program, the resources to do their job effectively, and the tools to become multicultural professionals.

Strategies for Asian American Students

In recent decades, migration waves have brought to the United States large numbers of Asians and Pacific Islanders. The many ethnicities that comprise the Asian/Pacific American (APA) population in the U.S. vary greatly in their sociocultural norms and level of literacy in even their native language. Moreover, there are vast differences between English and all the Asian languages, and between American culture and the many Asian cultures and communication patterns. These differences combine to complicate the ability of new-arrived Asian immigrant students to learn the English language, master American classroom discourse skills, and achieve academically in general. They also interfere with the productive involvement of immigrant parents in the children's education.

Strategies for Increasing Academic Achievement

Making learning a meaningful process is challenging for teachers of newcomer students, for they must find creative ways to make connections with them. The level of English language proficiency varies for newcomers, and they may have limited opportunities to practice English outside of school. Moreover, school discourse is more formal than other types of communication, and it is guided by a set linguistic and social rules that is conveyed through oral/written and nonverbal messages and interaction. Many newcomer students find the rules incomprehensible because they differ so widely from their experiences in Asian classrooms.

Further, American teachers expect students to be interactive, creative, and participatory, while APA parents teach their children to be quiet and obedient, and not to question teachers (Cheng, 1994). Thus, typical American classroom activities leave students feeling ambivalent and confused. American teachers may misinterpret students' resulting behavior as a sign of deficiency. For example, students may hesitate when responding to questions or offer very brief replies, the result of their lack of confidence in their answer, lack of knowledge about how convey the information,

insufficient knowledge of the topic, or simply fear of interactions with teachers. Similarly, students may speak very softly and avoid eye contact with adults, as a sign of respect in Asian cultures, or they may frown in concentration or giggle from embarrassment when speaking or receiving praise. Finally, immigrant students may fail to participate in a discussion or volunteer information, because in Asian classrooms do so may be considered bold.

An understanding of, and appreciation for, students' home culture, perceptions, values, and discourse rules, and the similarities and differences between Asian and American schools, can help administrators, teachers, counselors, and service providers bridge these cultural gaps. Indeed, experiences demonstrates that the most effective interventions take account of students' background, although they consider individuals, not the group to which they belong, first. Schools are most successful with newcomer students when they place them in learning situations appropriate to their level of English language proficiency and monitor their ability to function in all aspects of school life.

When problems arise with a student, educators have to consider a combination of explanations for them, including linguistic, cultural, traumatic, or neuro-physical, and be aware that misdiagnoses can result from communication difficulties (Cheng & Chang, 1995). They also need an awareness of common stereotypes or generalizations of Asian American children, based on a reliance on catalogs of cultural patterns; because labeling can put pressure on the students to live up to a false "whiz kid" image, and result in emotional distress and failure for them (Cheng, Chen, Tsubo, Sekandari, & Alfafara-Killacky, 1997).

Teachers can help create an optimal language learning environment for newcomer students by making no assumptions about what they already know and by anticipating their needs. Encouraging students to join social organizations increases their exposure to language as a social tool and to different types of discourse. Elements in the curriculum can nurture the students' bicultural identity, and celebrations of personal and national events can facilitate their transition into mainstream culture (Cheng, 1996):

Teachers can also use specific learning activities to promote newcomer students' English language development and comfort with American school culture, such as providing an explicit comparison between English and Asian languages; explaining and modeling written and unwritten school discourse rules, and reading to students to increase their vocabulary and expose them to various narrative styles (i.e., letters, stories, newspapers, magazines, biographies, poetry).

Strategies for Making Connections with Newcomer Families

Students benefit significantly from their parents' involvement in school activities; they will feel less marginalized as they view themselves and their families as constructive members of the school community. Even more significant, families can play an important role in their children's social, language, and literacy development by involving themselves in their education (Chang, Lai, & Shimizu, 1995).

Violence Prevention

The Extent of School Violence and Prevention Measures

Violence in schools has been a public concern, a subject of many research studies, and the focus of numerous youth prevention efforts for decades. Preventing school violence is one of the National Education Goals, and the goal of the Federal Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1994.

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 1998b) recently completed a survey with a nationally representative sample of more than a thousand public elementary, middle, and secondary schools to determine the extent of school violence. Results indicated that over half the schools experienced at least one incident of crime or violence during the 1996-97 school year, and 10 percent experienced at least one violent crime; with more secondary schools reporting violence than elementary schools. Other studies, conducted by a variety of research organizations in previous years, also indicated a violence problem in schools, but the extent of the problem varied from study to study; all, however, urged that measures be taken to solve the problem. In fact, NCES (1998b) reported that more than three-fourths of the schools in its survey have implemented some type of form violence prevention or reduction program, and that half of the schools with such programs indicated that all or almost all their students participated in them.

There are a great many different types of youth violence prevention programs operating now. Some focus on working with individual children identified by teachers or peers as aggressive or at risk for school failure. Others combine a focus on individual and family risk by integrating school-based programs and work with parents and families, peers, and community members. Still other programs integrate an individual risk focus with attempts to change the school environment. Most strive to both increase student social competence and reduce aggressive behavior.

Many prevention programs are demonstrating signs of success. While schools frequently developed them without evidence of their potential, since empirical data on effectiveness was lacking, schools are beginning to build serious evaluation components into their prevention programs.

The Definition of School Violence

Violence in youth exists along a continuum of behavior within a developmental framework.

For example, violent behavior for young elementary school children primarily consists of aggressive behaviors such as kicking, hitting, spitting, or name calling. As children grow older, behavior becomes more serious, characterized by bullying, extortion, and physical fighting. Aggressive or violent adolescents may engage in assault, sexual harassment, gang activity, or weapon carrying.

It is important to consider school violence along such a continuum because limiting the focus to serious acts of violence does not fully capture the nature and extent of school crime and victimization. While people are disturbed by increasing rates of school-based homicides, these occurrences constitute a relatively small proportion of incidents at school compared to property crimes, acts of assault or extortion, and threats of physical harm. Threats may occur frequently at school but may or may not be actually carried out on school grounds (Hanke, 1996). Witnessing acts of violence, in addition to being personally victimized by violence, can also cause students to be fearful and anxious, affect a student's willingness to attend school, and impact on a child's ability to learn and be socialized at school.

Finally, the consideration of school violence in this way permits an examination of how different forms of violence exposure and victimization affect children at various ages, grades, and different developmental levels, and those challenged to perform various developmental tasks. These issues are essential to consider for implementation and evaluation of school-based prevention programs.

Risk and Protective Factors Related to Aggression and Violence

Children at risk for aggression and violence are cognitively and socially different from their more socially competent peers. In general, there are six categories of risk:

- Perinatal risk; birth complications that can cause cognitive deficits; and childhood impulsivity, inflexibility, and frustration temperament,.
- Limited intelligence and intellectual development, and poor school achievement (Moffitt, 1993; Lochman & Dodge, 1994) .
- Very early onset and stability of aggressive, antisocial behavior (Loeber & Hay, 1994).

- Poor parenting, including maltreatment, rejection, abuse, neglect, and antisocial behavior (Patterson & Yoerger, 1993). Exposure to violence and victimization at home is also a risk factor.

- Exposure to violence, and victimization by violence, in the school and community (Widom, 1991; Singer, Anglin, Song, & Lunghofer, 1995).

- High exposure to violence in the media. There are three possible negative effects of exposure on children: acceptance of aggressive attitudes and personal aggressive behavior, desensitization to violence and its consequences, and development of a "mean world syndrome," which makes children very fearful of the threat of violence and convinced of the need to protect themselves and be distrustful of others. The effects of exposure to media violence are exacerbated by the existence of the other risk factors (Centerwall, 1992).

To fully understand aggression and violence and how to prevent it, it is necessary also to have some understanding of the factors that contribute to child resiliency. Three kinds of phenomena in children indicate resilience: (1) good outcomes despite high-risk status, (2) sustained competence under stress, and (3) recovery from trauma. Resilient child have an easy temperament and a higher IQ, are more autonomous but have a positive relationship with at least one supportive adult, and are attached to and successful at school (Werner, 1994).

Effects of Exposure to Violence on Child Development

Victimization by violence can disrupt the course of child development in very fundamental ways and can be associated with symptomatology over the course of the life span. A child exposed to chronic violence is more likely to form disorganized attachments to caregivers and other adults and to experience difficulty in developing a healthy sense of initiative. Children exposed to or victimized by violence may experience heightened anxiety or sleep disturbance, have difficulty achieving bowel and bladder control, or experience delays in language acquisition. A child exposed to chronic violence may develop a sense of learned helplessness, seriously affecting mood and the development of a sense of self-control. Early exposure may also seriously damage a child's sense of future orientation and hopefulness (Singer, Anglin, Song, & Lunghofer, 1995; Osofsky, 1997).

The School as a Setting for Violence

Children bring into the classroom their family environments, their experiences in the neighborhood, their attitudes about how to handle frustration and respond to discipline, and their entire socialization and view of the world. The spillover of the social and economic conditions of neighborhoods and communities into schools is pervasive and broad ranging. School is also a place where children from diverse racial and cultural backgrounds come together and spend a great part of their day. This can contribute to incidents of violence due to racial tension, cultural differences in attitudes and behavior, or an admixture of children from diverse neighborhoods (e.g., busing children to school from a different part of town).

Large and overcrowded classrooms, common in urban schools, contribute to a school's potential for violence. Students receive only minimal personal attention, and staff is able to mediate only the most serious forms of discord.

Firearms are increasingly available to young people, and more and more children are bringing weapons to school because they say they fear for their safety. In addition, schools are a place where many active gang members recruit new members, and where children are exposed to gang activity. Most reports estimate that between 5 and 8 percent of youth are at high risk for engaging in violent, gang-related activities (Tolan & Guerra, 1994).

Violence Prevention in School

Ensuring that basic safety needs are met is an essential first step in providing children with a school environment conducive to learning and socialization. One "first step" approach to addressing school violence is implementation of an effective security program. Less punitive approaches include conflict resolution to settle disputes nonviolently, mentoring programs to provide at-risk students with supportive adult role models, new curricula to build character and develop moral reasoning, and partnerships between schools and social service counseling agencies. More and more, schools are developing comprehensive programs for preventing violence that include, but are not limited to, these specific measures.

Determining what type of program, or combination of program components, is best for a particular school requires an assessment of the school's circumstances, student body, and resources. Assessments must continue as the program operates so that changes can be made to account for new developments and improve outcomes. Such evaluation data can then be used to support requests for funding the program's continuation. Effective programs use four types of assessment:

- ***Program needs assessment*** that provides schools with information about the nature and prevalence of violence and victimization at the school and in the neighborhood, the impact of exposure to violence on child adjustment and mental health and learning, and the psychosocial precursors of youth violence which affect the students.

- ***Outcome evaluation*** that answers the questions "what changed because of the intervention" and determines whether violence was reduced as a result of the program.

- ***Process evaluation*** that analyzes what works best about the program and why.

- ***Cost-benefit analysis*** that determines the cost effectiveness of the program.

Components of Effective Prevention Programs

Effective approaches to violence prevention in the schools are multi-component and multi-context interventions. They include parents, children, school staff, media, police officers, local businesses, and community-based organizations; and they are not time limited. Approaches that focus on only one risk factor (e.g., self-esteem) are also less effective. Research has shown that potentially the most effective programs go beyond a concentration on individual children and attempt to meaningfully change the climate or culture of the entire school. This is not to say that individual child-focused programs are ineffective and should be discontinued; they are a valuable violence prevention tool. They do not, however, address the contextual/environmental or structural characteristics of a school that contribute to the incidence of violence. Programs also typically need to last at least two years before they demonstrate a change in behavior that is sustainable over time (Yoshikawa, 1994).

Different prevention needs require use of different interventions. Programs components that have been shown to be universally successful:

- are instituted early, and are developmentally appropriate, comprehensive, and long-term;

- recognize that violence is learned behavior and can therefore be unlearned;
- develop student social competence;
- improve the school climate through good organization, and increased student, staff, and parent attachment and participation;
- take into account the impact of violence and victimization by violence;
- involve parents and community organizations and members;
- integrate violence-related issues into teacher training; and
- have a comprehensive evaluation program.

In addition, adults involved in prevention efforts who are hopeful and model this hopefulness to children are more successful than those who do not. Longitudinal evidence spanning many years shows that most children are extremely resilient and overcome a great deal of hardship and turmoil in their lives, growing up to be high-functioning, well-adjusted, and productive adults (Werner, 1994). Hopelessness is one of the most disparaging and difficult to overcome aspects of youth's reactions to the violence they encounter daily in their lives. If they do not expect to have a good life, or to live long, then their day-to-day behavior, goals, and motivation to succeed will reflect this hopelessness.

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